Illegal production and trade in opium

2668. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had constituted a high level committee to review the present arrangements for dealing with various aspects of drug problems;

(b) if so, by when the committee is likely to submit its report to Government;

(c) whether illegal production and trade in opium could be checked effectively; and

(d) if so, the details of the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Committee is headed by the Minister of State (Revenue and Expenditure). The Committee is expected to submit its report by 30.6.94.

(c) and (d) Production of opium in the country is regulated under strict licensing control and supervision by the Central Government. Various law enforcement agencies keep strict vigil over poppy cultivation and stringent penal measures are taken under the NDPS Act for any violation.

Riising of DA for calculating retiring benefits

2669. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that treating twenty per cent dearness allowance as pay for grant of retiring benefits to Central Government employees is very much on the low side: and

(b) if so, what steps Government propose to mitigate the hardships of reiring employees and by when the decision for raising the portion of dearess allowance for calculating the retiring benefits is likely to be taken and the date from which it would be operative?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) The Staff Side of the National Council of the Joint Consultative Machinery had raised a demand regarding merger of a portion of dearness allowance with pay for the purpose of certain service benefits. The demand was considered in the special meetings of the Standing Committee of the National Council wherein a package was agreed upon between the Official Side and the Staff Side. As per the agreed package, in the case of Central Government employees who retire or die on or after 16th September, 1993, a portion of the dearness allowance as linked to the average Consumer Price Index of 729.91 obtaining as on 1.3.1988, i.e. 20 per cent of the basic pay shall be treated as dearness pay for reckoning emoluments for the purpose of retirement gratuity and death gratuity only under the C.C.S. (Pension Rules), 1972.

(b) No proposal is under consideration of Government to raise the existing level of DA merger with pay for the purpose of death-cum-retirement gratuity.

Credit cards and Travellers cheques

2670 SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the names of banks whom Government have granted permission to handle credit cards and travellers cheques business;

(b) the names of banks whose applications are awaiting Government

permission to start handling of credit cards and travellers cheques, etc.;

(c) the nuber of credit cards so far issued by each bank; and

(d) what steps Government propose to take to encourage the issue re credit cards and travellers cheques by the banks, and to remove mistrust in the concept of credit cards among the public?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (DR. ABRAR AHMED): (a) to (d) The names of nationalised banks engaged in the credidt cards business and the number of credit cards issued by them are given in the Statement. (*See* below).

There is no proposal from banks pertaining credit cards business awaiting permission from the RBI.

As regards issue of Rupee Travellers Cheques, the RBI have reported that it is one of the banking services normally rendered by the banks and they are not required to obtain permission from the RBI.

Diversification of a bank into credit card business is an independent decision of the concerned bank.

Statement

Information regarding Credit Cards issued by Nationalised Banks (As readily available with RBI)

S No.	Name of the Bank	Name of the Card	Card Membership (As on 31-3-93)
1.	Andhra Bank	Andhra Card	73007
2.	Bank of Baroda	BOB Card	153320
3.	Bank of India	India Card	23500
4.	Vijaya Bank	--	38462
5.	Canara Bank	Canard	183348
6.	Central Bank of India	Central Card	91220
7.	Syndicate Bank	Canard (Tie-up with Canara Bank)	8583
8.	Corporation Bank	-do- -do-	6331
9.	Punjab & Sind Bank	-do- -do-	Not Available
10.	Dena Bank	-do- -do-	3065
11.	Indian Overseas Bank	-do- -do-	3978
12.	Union Bank of India	-do- -do-	8315 (30.9.93)
13.	Bank of Maharashtra	India Card (Tie-up with Bank of India)	1688
14.	Oriental Bank of Commerce	India Card -do-	2363
15.	Allahabad Bank	India Card -do-	15291 (30.9.93)
16.	United Bank of India	Central Card (Tie-up with Central Bank of India)	2612